

23 May 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Comments on Jack Anderson's Column, 22 May
Washington Post, entitled "Files Show Martin
Waited Too Long".

1. Because of the possibility that the contents of Subject article may generate inquiries from Congressional circles, I would like to record my own observations concerning the frequently voiced charge against Ambassador Martin that he, in Mr. Anderson's words "badly botched" the evacuation effort from South Vietnam.

2. It is my belief, based on all the information available to me, that the basic purpose of the evacuation, i.e. to prevent American citizens from suffering bodily harm and/or to prevent the Vietnamese Communists to utilize captured American citizens as a political pressure tool was carried out with complete success. In the course of evacuating the Americans a large number of Vietnamese were also evacuated, some 70 to 80,000 through the direct assistance of U.S. authorities and some 50,000 more on their own initiative. (While President Ford has reportedly said on 9 April that he foresaw a need for the evacuation of some 175,000 to 200,000 Vietnamese, no directive to that effect was ever given to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. Indeed, the emphasis seemed to be toward evacuating fewer rather than larger numbers of people and the Attorney General's original parole authority was extended only to 50,000. Considering the problems currently experienced in refugee housing and resettlement, one can readily imagine the difficulties had we evacuated twice as many Vietnamese as we did in fact.)

3. Mr. Anderson's article fails to take into consideration the following vital factors bearing on the evacuation effort:

a. The Administration's policy, repeatedly emphasized to the Embassy in Saigon, called for the maintenance of a viable South Vietnam. This in effect

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General ^{Approved For Release 2005/07/14 : CIA-RDP81M00980R002700090068-0} authorization for admission to the U.S. by parole was promulgated (rather late in the game as I recall) the Ambassador could operate only within the narrow confines of U.S. immigration law.

(7) The allegation that Ambassador Martin refused to accept a list of "intellectuals who were vulnerable to communist retaliation" which the State Department wanted to cable him is silly on the face of it. The Department does not need any Ambassador's concurrence to send a cable from Washington.


(8) While we have no doubt that there were some crooks who made money out of human misery in Saigon-- and there are such people everywhere--there were no "exit petitions" as such, nor was there any connection between any alleged exit petitions and the actual exit. To recapitulate: as long as the South Vietnamese Government was a functioning entity "legal" exits could be accomplished only as follows:

(A) With legal travel documents.

(B) As "dependent" of an American who was being evacuated.

(C) As a Key Indigenous Person (KIP) if so classified by an official U.S. authority.

4. With reference to the next to last paragraph in Mr. Anderson's column that "of the 175,000 Vietnamese whom the President had hoped to rescue, the paperwork had been completed for 130,000 but that only 45,000 made it", I would like to emphasize that no figure of 175,000 Vietnamese to be rescued was ever transmitted to the Embassy. There was certainly no "paperwork completed" on 130,000 Vietnamese to be rescued. In any case the air transportation made available to the Mission could not conceivably have carried the numbers of people-- even small South Vietnamese without luggage--that Mr. Anderson is so freely mentioning. There is no doubt in my mind that the evacuation of key indigenous personnel by the American Embassy was an important contributing factor to the total collapse of South Vietnamese resistance on 30 April and that an earlier start of massive evacuation of key indigenous would have precipitated a collapse even earlier.


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